

AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend the claims as follows:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(currently amended)** A composition for inhibiting specific gene expression with reduced side effects, the composition comprising a modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide that is complementary to a portion of a genomic region or gene for which inhibition of expression is desired, or to RNA transcribed from such a gene, wherein the modified CpG is racemic and is selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, **stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG**, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG.

2. **(canceled)**

3. **(previously presented)** A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide with reduced side effects of splenomegaly and depletion of platelets when administered to a mammal, comprising administering to the mammal a composition according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is being expressed in the mammal.

4. **(previously presented)** A method for providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide, with reduced side effects, to an individual with a disease caused by aberrant gene expression, the method comprising administering to an individual having the disease a composition according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotide is complementary to a gene that is aberrantly expressed, wherein such aberrant expression causes the disease.

5. **(currently amended)** A method for reducing side effects of a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide administered to a mammal, comprising:

(a) providing a CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide having a racemic CpG modification selected from the group consisting of alkylphosphonate CpG, inverted CpG, 2'-O-substituted CpG, ~~stereospecific phosphorothioate CpG~~, phosphotriester CpG, phosphoramidate CpG, and 2'-5' CpG; and

(b) administering the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide to the mammal,

wherein administration of the modified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide results in fewer side effects than the administration of an unmodified CpG-containing phosphorothioate oligonucleotide.

6. – 15. (canceled)